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REVIEW OF THE EFFICIENCY OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL FUNCTIONING OF THE UNITED NATIONS

Restructuring of the Secretariat of the Organization

Note by the Secretary-General

1. The role of the United Nations is anchored in the Charter and in the schemes for international cooperation in the political, economic, social and humanitarian sectors drawn up by the policy-making organs. Even as the Organization adheres to the constants of its purposes and principles it must respond to the needs of a world in rapid transformation.

2. If the Organization is to perform optimally, it must receive the best quality of assistance possible from its Secretariat, which should place a premium on integrity, impartiality, efficiency and creativity.

3. The need for periodic restructuring of the Secretariat is evident. This is particularly so at a time of fundamental changes around the world, to which the Secretariat must adapt.

4. Mindful of this and the widespread feeling within the Membership that the Secretariat should be restructured in order to respond effectively to the challenges facing it, I announced on 7 and 13 February 1992, certain changes in the top echelon of the Secretariat. These changes are intended to consolidate and streamline the Organization's activities into well-defined functional categories aimed at ensuring effective implementation of the objectives of the Charter and of the mandates entrusted by the policy-making organs. Following are the main aspects of this restructuring:

Department of Political Affairs

5. As was evident during the recent Summit Meeting of the Security Council, and as may be seen from the Presidential statement issued on that occasion

(S/23500), the Membership expects the Organization to develop an enhanced capacity for preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peace-keeping. The Secretariat is expected to assist in the gathering and analysis of information, in alerting the relevant organs about impending crises or emergencies, and in carrying out mandates decided upon by the Security Council, the General Assembly and other competent organs.

6. In response to these concerns, I decided to establish a Department of Political Affairs headed by two Under-Secretaries-General with clearly defined geographical responsibilities and functions. This new Department will incorporate the activities of the following former departments and offices: Office for Political and General Assembly Affairs and Secretariat Services; Office for Research and the Collection of Information; Department of Political and Security Council Affairs; Department for Special Political Questions, Regional Cooperation, Decolonization and Trusteeship and the Department for Disarmament Affairs.

Department of Peace-keeping Operations

7. In order to strengthen the capacity of the Secretariat in the area of peace-keeping, and to enhance its planning and managerial capability, I established the Department of Peace-keeping Operations which incorporates the former Office of Special Political Affairs. It is headed by an Under-Secretary-General, and will now be reinforced by an Assistant Secretary-General.

Department of Economic and Social Development

8. Economic and social development are among the highest priorities of the United Nations. It is therefore of the utmost importance to ensure that all available resources for this sector are fully coordinated and utilized to optimum effect.

9. In order to redress the fragmentation which existed in the Secretariat, I considered it essential to regroup the various units under unified leadership. The following units have now been incorporated in the Department of Economic and Social Development, headed by an Under-Secretary-General: Office of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Cooperation; Department of International Economic and Social Affairs; Department of Technical Cooperation for Development; Centre for Science and Technology for Development; and, United Nations Centre on Transnational Corporations. This is the first step in the reorganization of this sector and I have asked the Under-Secretary-General to prepare a revised organizational structure for the department which would serve to enhance the capacity of the United Nations in this area of vital concern to the Membership and in particular to the developing countries.

10. I have also decided to undertake a review of the functioning and role of the various units addressing social development issues, particularly the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs in Vienna. Further

efforts will include the harmonization of the activities of this new Department with those of the regional commissions and of other relevant parts of the Secretariat such as the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the United Nations Environment Programme. My goal will be, as stated above, to maximize the impact of the United Nations in the field of economic and social development.

Department of Humanitarian Affairs

11. A growing responsibility of the United Nations is the provision of humanitarian assistance. Recently the Organization has increasingly been called upon to play a leadership role in coordinating emergency assistance to those threatened by natural and man-made disasters.

12. Bearing in mind General Assembly resolution 46/182 of 19 December 1991, which, inter alia, requested me to appoint an Emergency Relief Coordinator, I have established a Department of Humanitarian Affairs under the direction of an Under-Secretary-General, based in New York. This Department will draw on the resources of the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator and will consolidate existing offices which deal with complex emergencies. The secretariat of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction will become an integral part of this Department. The Under-Secretary-General will work closely with organizations and entities of the United Nations system, as well as the International Committee of the Red Cross, the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the International Organization for Migration and relevant non-governmental organizations. At the country level, the Under-Secretary-General will maintain close contact with, and provide leadership to, the Resident Coordinators on matters relating to humanitarian assistance. He will also assume responsibility for all emergency relief activities at present being undertaken by the Secretariat of the United Nations.

Department of Administration and Management

13. In order to consolidate the work of the Organization in this area, the former Department of Conference Services has been incorporated into the Department for Administration and Management.

Office of Legal Affairs

14. For similar reasons, the Office for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea has been integrated into the Office of Legal Affairs.

15. In making these changes, I have been guided by the need to improve the level and quality of services provided by the Secretariat. Adjustment will be required at the outset but I am confident that the new arrangements will be beneficial to the Organization.

16. In reorganizing the Secretariat, I have sought to utilize the talents available within it in the best possible manner and to the maximum extent.

This is the first phase of the restructuring. Senior staff have been given contracts of one year's duration, which will facilitate subsequent stages of reorganization.

17. The regrouping and consolidation which I have outlined entails a reduction in the number of high-level posts in the Secretariat. The General Assembly, in various resolutions adopted on the review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations, had emphasized the need for such a reduction. The implications of this first phase of the restructuring of the Secretariat will be presented to the General Assembly in the form of revised estimates to the programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993.